

2016 Arlington Town Meeting

Article 22 Tree Preservation Bylaw

Answering concerns of town residents about clear cutting of trees during development, the Arlington Tree Committee collaborated with key stakeholders in town, including residents, builders, and town officials, and drafted the Tree Preservation Bylaw. That bylaw is Article 22 at the 2016 Town Meeting, which starts April 25. The Selectmen unanimously voted to support Article 22. Other towns have tree bylaws, varying in detail and impact on builders. Arlington's Tree Preservation Bylaw strikes a balance between the needs of the community, the work load of stretched town departments, and the business of builders in Arlington, while reducing the net loss of trees due to development.

- ✓ The Tree Preservation Bylaw only applies during major construction projects, such as demolition, building a new house, or building an addition that increases the house footprint by 50 percent or more. It will not affect a homeowner's right to remove trees on their private property under any other circumstances.
- ✓ The bylaw requires the developer, prior to any site work, to obtain the Tree Warden's approval of a Tree Plan which identifies every mature tree of a diameter of 10" or more located within a property's legal setback and explains whether the tree will be kept or removed. The builder will be required to mitigate removal of a mature tree in the setback by either replacing the tree on the property (minimum 2.5" caliper, native species able to obtain height of 50') or by paying a replacement fee (\$500 per tree) into the Town's tree fund to be used to plant a tree in the vicinity of the removal or elsewhere in the Town.
- ✓ The bylaw imposes a fine (\$1500 per tree) for starting site work without obtaining the Tree Warden's approval of a Tree Plan.
- ✓ Article 22 will add an estimated ½ day per week of additional time for the Tree Department

Why are trees important to Arlington?

This bylaw is consistent with Arlington's Master Plan, which states as a goal, "Value, protect, and enhance the physical beauty and natural resources of Arlington" and demonstrates in its implementation recommendations that mature trees on private property are valuable to the town.

Trees improve air quality, protect us from heat and glare, reduce noise pollution, limit topsoil erosion and storm water runoff, provide natural flood control, enhance property values, contribute to the distinct character of neighborhoods and offer natural privacy to neighbors. Trees shelter birds and other wildlife and connect us to the seasons of the year.

Visit www.arlingtontrees.org for more information on Article 22, the Tree Preservation Bylaw.